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TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PHUM](#) [PINR](#) [KDEM](#) [EG](#) [US](#)
SUBJECT: (U) PRESSING EGYPT ON TORTURE CASE

REF: CAIRO 3161

Classified by Ambassador Francis Ricciardone, for reasons 1.4
(b) and (d).

¶1. (C) Summary: Egyptian human rights circles are outraged by reports of the alleged torture by police of Mohammad Al-Shargawy and Kamal Al-Shaer, activists with "Youth for Change," an offshoot of the Kefaya movement. According to press and blog accounts, police detained Shargawy and Shaer after the conclusion of the May 25 demonstrations in support of judicial independence, and then battered and sexually assaulted Shargawy at the Qasr Al-Nil police station, in the Garden City district of Cairo. Shaer was reportedly beaten but not sexually assaulted. Shargawy and Shaer remain in detention at Tora prison, in a cohort of more than 400 activists--most of whom belong to the Muslim Brotherhood--who have been detained in the past month in connection with a series of demonstrations in support of judicial independence. The Ambassador has expressed USG concern over the case to President Mubarak and the Prime Minister's staff. The DCM has demarched the MFA and we have urged senior security officials to investigate. End summary.

¶2. (C) According to multiple wire service and blogs (e.g., [www.arabist.net](#) and [www.manalaa.net](#)), police initially detained Shargawy in late April after he participated in the initial round of protests in support of judicial independence. After a month of detention at Tora prison, Shargawy was released on May 23--with a warning not to participate in any future demonstrations. He then participated in the May 25 demonstrations, carrying a sign reading "I want my rights." On the evening of May 25, after the demonstration appeared to have passed peacefully, Shargawy and another Youth for Change activist, Kamal Al-Shaer, were detained by the security forces.

¶3. (C) Journalists, including AP and BBC reporters, witnessed the arrests. Gamal Eid, a human rights lawyer and activist, met with Shargawy on Friday, May 26 and soon spread the word that Shargawy and Shaer said they had been beaten badly. Shargawy also managed to smuggle out a letter describing intense beatings by police at Qasr El-Nil police station, and charged that the police had sodomized him (translation of the letter is at [www.arabist.net](#)).

¶4. (C) Shargawy's letter, plus the statements of his lawyer, Gamal Eid, are the primary sources for the current charges. In addition, wire service reports have also noted that several other visitors to Tora prison (who were visiting detainees other than Shargawy) have reported that he appeared to have been abused. Eid and other activists have sought access to Shargawy by an independent doctor, but thus far the authorities at Tora prison have only permitted access by an

in-house forensic doctor. Sharqawy and Shaer face an initial 15 day detention, after which the authorities may choose to begin a formal investigation, release them, or simply renew their detentions for another 15 days. We have also spoken with the local representative for Human Rights Watch and understand that HRW will likely issue a statement on the case shortly.

¶5. (S) The Ambassador raised USG concern about torture and police brutality with President Mubarak on May 30, after having raised the Sharqawy case in detail with presidential advisor Soliman Awad and PM's Chief of Staff Zaghoul on May ¶28. The president did not respond to the allegations (see septel, notal). Both senior aides challenged the veracity of the abuse reports. Another senior Embassy officer separately urged senior State Security officials to investigate the allegations and, if confirmed, prosecute the perpetrators. The DCM also told MFA Assistant Minister Salama Shaker to take USG concerns seriously and look into the matter. The Ambassador also will raise this case in his call on MinInt Adly on May 31.
RICCIARDONE